Jennifer L. Chick

Philosophy of Education

Abstract

My philosophy is mainly a student-centered focus with an interdisciplinary approach. This means that the students are in control of much of their learning and they are aided by the connections between content areas. I believe that English, when applied constructively, can be what some programs are missing. It can be used to fill in the gaps between connecting other subjects, stretching the students into the community (for things other than observation and community service), giving students the tools and strategies they need to delve deeper into any content.

I firmly believe in a student-based educational platform, where the teacher becomes more of a guide on their journey through learning about the world around them. Community is an integral piece into the way a student functions inside and outside of the classroom. I believe that through connections to their community and the world far beyond it, students will discover what true engagement is all about and will become life-long learners, as well as productive and useful citizens. This is not to say that I don’t find the value in an individualistic learning approach. I think that independent work is great, so long as the independence is led by the student, not expected of them. I think every student should be responsible for framing and developing their learning and that every student gains something different from every experience. Pacing and personal connections will be something that student is in charge in. I expect that we will discuss things about discipline in the classroom, and work together to find solutions to problems that we find. I think that coming from an educational age that relied heavily upon good listeners and limited interactions, I would like to approach my students as people who also have things to share.

I want my students to not only learn the content, but be able to project it into the world and apply it to their real lives. Without these connections I feel that education becomes meaningless. I also want to community itself to make regular appearances inside the school and the classroom. These approaches, I believe, will also fuel reflection, which is another thing I deem extremely important in my classroom. Students should not only be presented with big ideas and real issues, but they should have the ability to think about them and share their thoughts in a comfortable, tolerant environment of their peers.

If my classroom is run in this mass-customized way, it will have to be standards based, and for things that are not whole class, clear guidelines, and expectations will need to be communicated to each student in order for them to understand what needs to be accomplished in order to pass. I believe that giving and working with the students to understand the standards is to best way to approach that. I also believe that if they are connecting things to other content areas, they will be completing many of the standards multiple times. I feel that this is crucial in showing proficiency of a standard, instead of judging it based on one application of their knowledge. I think that the learning focus will shift constantly, but my goal is to make it authentic.